/117 cont./

628 tendency toward the independence of the next smaller parts acting on this plane and forming it -- namely, the villages.

These hostile relationships between the villages are external evidence of a centrifugal force in Waika culture seeking detach-
628 ment. The opposite tendency, the centripetal force toward bind-
574 ing the villages together, finds its expression in active intercourse
438 for trading and visiting. These trips, which are performed with such zeal that practically every second day there is some association with another village, from or to it, can be divided into sev-
438 eral groups, according to their purpose. First, trips purely for trade take place: each village prefers to produce or procure a certain article of the material culture so that it practically has a monopoly on it. One village supplies especially fine tobacco, another is favorably located in a place where much arrow-cane grows, a third produces pots because good clay is present in the vicinity, another is the supplier of hunting dogs for the neighborhood, and the village closest to us naturally barters primarily with European ironware. This formation of centers for specific goods naturally favored the development of commercial traffic; the trading itself is carried out over very long periods and thus resembles a gift-exchange behind which there is a certain amount
437 of compulsion. When one knows that the partner has more objects of a kind than he justifiably needs for himself, it is requested very urgently, and the one so entreated may not refuse, if he does not want to risk enmity and war -- he can, of course, get his revenge
[182] in his own way the next time. This system successfully prevents
[556] any accumulation of capital; no Waika possesses noticeably more
[565] than his neighbor; there are no social distinctions; and consequently no vertical classes.

628 Besides trade, the transmission of news, which proceeds in the
574 form of a /118/ ceremonial conversational-singing and not in
[203] simple dialogue, is also one purpose of such trips, as are wife-
[533] seeking and courting in other villages. As a rule all these trips
[584] are made by a group of men or young people who are guests for one or at most two nights in the strange village and then, after the trading has been done, oddly enough not until the last minute

Surára
Pakidái

884 /67 cont./
86 poisonous snake of South America, which is over three meters
[302] long. The painting is supposed to help to banish the dangers that
825 emanate from this and other poisonous snakes. As daily nourish-
[262] ment the two candidates may take only a ripe banana and half a
liter of water. After two months they are very thin and appear to
[276] be nothing but skin and bones. In order to suppress their feeling
of hunger and thirst, they constantly have the roll of tobacco
mixed with water and ashes between their lower or upper lip and
[782] teeth (see p.190). Moreover, they must blow large pinches of
[276] the snuff-powder into each other's noses several times a day in
order to make contact with the gigantic animal and plant spirits --
hekurá. Thus, they pass their training period in a regular trance-
state.

884 It is worth noting that the initiation rites of the male members
756 of the tribe take place comparatively late, and that in this way
776 all the men are gradually trained as medicine-man helpers.
Through this, the Surára chief Hewemão explained to me, they
are able to protect themselves and their families against sickness
and accidents in an emergency. If, for example, a man is
threatened along the way by a poisonous snake or a jaguar, he is
now in a position to banish the danger by calling upon the tutelary
spirits. He must never fail to thank the hekurá after a successful
hunting expedition or a good harvest, however, for otherwise he
755 would incur their anger. Even when his wife, one of his children,
[753] or a relative falls ill, he himself must first try, by means of song
and dance in which he addresses the hekurá, to hurl the sickness
back to the hostile tribe from which it was sent. Only if his efforts
remain unsuccessful may he appeal for the aid of the chief, who
is always willing and, with the help of 8-9 assistants, carries out a
great rekurá (cure). Thus, during the day /68/ or at night among
the Surára and Pakidái one frequently sees one man, or often even
several men, praying or attempting to cure a member of the
[276] family. Before that, however, they must take snuff-powder because
contact with the hekurá can be made only in a state of intoxica-
● [533] tion. The songs are somewhat monotonous and are combined with
animal sounds, animal movements, such as the beating of wings,
hopping, etc.

/100 cont./

755 cries in the most diverse tones, they rushed toward the sick woman. They were like a wild horde, for the participants screamed at the top of their voices, bent their knees, leaped into the air, and shook their fists at an invisible foe. After a renewed hissing sound by Hewemãõ, they formed a circle around the sick woman lying in her hammock, and each man placed both hands on the shoulders of the one standing in front of him. With swaying dance steps, two forward and one back, during which they sang ho-he-hi-ha-fk, ho-he-hi-ha-fk, they walked around the patient for some time. Then Hewemãõ hissed for the third time, whereupon the song ceased. Then the chief struck up a melodious song which his helpers underscored with humming. Meanwhile, with swaying step, they continued to move around the sick woman, their hands always on the shoulders of the man in front as before. After 15 minutes Hewemãõ hissed again, and then they laid their hands crossed upon the shoulders of the one walking ahead. At the same time all the men joined in the song /101/ of the chief, and again they sang in parts. This choral singing, together with the dancing in step, lasted another 20 minutes. Then the chief and his brother Kurikayawõ placed themselves opposite each other at the head end of the patient and struck up an alternate song. At the foot end squatted two helpers who also faced each other and hummed softly. A short distance behind the head end two more helpers danced back and forth with faces turned toward each other; they were also humming, and occasionally they uttered bird-like sounds; they frequently ran their fingers through their hair and then always passed them downward over their seats. Meanwhile the other three men, two painted red, the one black-colored, that is to say, two "hekurã" and "nonexf," were carrying on a sham battle beyond the foot end of Xanimã, in a manner similar to that already described on page 216. In the meantime the daughter-in-law of the sick woman had raised her up and had seated herself behind her in the hammock, at the same time supporting the old woman with both arms. Then when the sham combat was ended, and the bad "nonexf" lay on the

535 533 755 533 535 755

/101 cont./

755 me, contact with the hekurá would not be broken. Toward 4:30, the rain had stopped in the meantime, the nine men once more gathered around the sick woman and continued the cure for another two hours in the manner described above. By forenoon the fever was gone and the woman was on the way to recovery. She and every other member of the tribe were convinced that Hewemãõ had hurled the evil spirit of sickness, nonexí, back to the Waiká. Even Hewemãõ himself firmly believes that in the snuff-powder intoxication and with the help of the hekurá and the moon he is able to ward off sickness and accidents and to cast them out.

/102/ The two above-described magic performances for warding off two different diseases show a certain external pattern. Each cure begins with the taking of snuff-powder, which causes the chief and his helpers to fall into a state of ecstasy and to identify themselves with the hekurá. There follows the invocation of the hekurá, which is reinforced by wild gestures, then the sham struggle between two or more "hekurá" and the spirit of sickness, "nonexí." After that, very definite texts, melodies, and dances are used for each sickness. Unforgettable
•[533] for me are the choral part-songs which contain the requests to the hekurá and the serras, who, in turn, relay them to Poré/Perimbó (see pp. 197 ff.) (503).

[126]

503. I deeply regret that I was unable to record these songs on a sound track. Unfortunately, the tape recorder which the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft had sent by courier to the German Consulate in São Paulo before the start of my expedition was damaged by an employee there. Without permission, he had unpacked it and tinkered with it. Thus, I can only hope that on a subsequent expedition I shall have an opportunity to record these songs.

769 25 [462] /103 cont./ few days. This roasting belongs to the men's sphere of duties, as does the harvesting of pupunha fruits. The latter are then made into a drink by the women. Moreover, they fetched from the plantings large quantities of bananas which were put in the sun so that they could ripen, and, finally, it should be mentioned that among all the families several stacks of manioc flat-cakes were piled up little by little.

769 535 [276] On the evening of April fourth, toward 9:00, the actual festival began. Five men and five boys, who wore cotton belts over their hip cords, danced, after the former had first blown snuff-powder into each other's noses, one behind the other (two steps forward and one back, during which the more marked lifting of the knees with a slight turning outward of the legs is to be noted), on a circular path in the open circle of the maloka, and, to be sure, counterclockwise (509a). The first two men

509a. In all the dances that go around the periphery of a circle the participants dance counterclockwise.

each held two arrows in the right hand, and the rest, as well as all the boys, had their hands crossed behind their heads. [533] Occasionally one man would sing in a beautiful, full bass voice, and the others would then join in chorus. The songs were very melodious and furnished the rhythm for the dance steps (509b).

[534] 509b. The Surára and Pakidái accompany dances in part with songs, for musical instruments are unknown to them.

[276] Toward 10:00 more men, in part with arrows, in part without, and boys (all without arrows) joined the dancers, and at 11:30 all the men and boys, with the exception of the Surára chief, were gathered in the center of the maloka courtyard, where, from a large clay plate filled with snuff-powder that had been placed here along with several snuff tubes, they blew huge quantities into each other's noses. Then they sat down in a

Surára
Pakidái

769 /103 cont./Then they sat down in a
535 circle and started singing a song in chorus. Soon afterwards
[533] five warriors, holding arrows in both hands, arose and danced around the singers. Now and then they made huge leaps and shouted in a high, shrill voice. All this was enacted on a cool, cloudy, full-moon night, but the numerous hearths added some light. All the women and girls, as well as my servant Mateus and I, lay in the hammocks and watched the unique spectacle. Toward 1:00 in the morning the male participants in the festival arose and now danced, again one behind the other, around the outer circle of the maloka courtyard. They were arranged in such a way that a man with two arrows was always followed by one who held his hands crossed behind his head.

[622] Suddenly Chief Hewemão, who was sleeping in his ham-
[123] mock next to me, was tapped lightly by a warrior with an arrow. He got up at once, removed shirt and trousers (he had been given the two articles of clothing by me as gifts), took a bow without a bowstring in his hand, had snuff-powder blown into his nose, and mixed with the dancers, who, however, immediately after his entrance formed the following new formation: Ten men arranged themselves in rhombus form at the head of the dance procession, one at the very front, two behind to one side, and two more behind and to one side of these; two stood directly opposite the latter, then followed two who stood somewhat inward and finally one who was in the middle behind these (Fig. 29). The first five warriors, who had blackened themselves with soot, symbolized the nonexí (evil spirits or spirits of sickness, see p. 211) and were obliged to dance backwards. The five dancers following them embodied hekurá (gigantic animal and plant spirits who /104/ /Fig. 29 appears here/ Pakidái; see pp. 199, 214 ff.). Between these two groups of five, the participants of which each held two arrows in their hands, a sham battle was being carried out during the dance (see also pp. 214 ff.). Each of the men of the first group danced two steps back and one forward, and those of the second, two steps forward and one back. In between, wild leaps and turns were executed, the men threatened each other with the arrows and screamed in the highest key. The "nonexí" were constantly in

Surára
Pakidái

/105 cont./

769 in the ear lobes were adorned with colorful feather ornaments
[302] (see pp. 93/95). Moreover, they had all glued into their hair
[301] the white down feathers of the gavião-real (Thrasaetus harpyia L.), the dreaded carrier of sickness (see p. 211) (Ill. 43). They
769 made mighty leaps, then bent their knees, turned around
535 several times in between, threw their arrows into the air and
533 caught them again. After that they fell into a dance in step, during which they sang. But this dance was constantly interrupted by wild charges and rousing shouts, which were supposed to drive the nonexí out of the maloka and show them how dangerous it was to come here at all. The others present were enthusiastically watching this performance from their hearths. For the
[302] occasion of the festival all the men, women, and children had
[292] likewise painted themselves and in part donned the cotton belts;
[301] moreover, the men wore their upper-arm ornaments of feathers (Ills. 9-11).

769 After this two-hour dance performance a particularly solemn ceremony took place, the blessing of the preserved bone ashes of deceased tribesmen. For this purpose two leading personalities of each of the two tribes sat down in a square formation before the chief's hut. The Surára chief Hewemão was squatting in such a way that he faced the maloka courtyard. To the right and left of him, somewhat to the side and forward, squatted the Pakidái chief, Karenauõ, and Hewemão's brother, Kurikayawõ, respectively, and opposite Hewemão, Porêhiwõ, the war chief of the Pakidái, had his place. In front of the latter were arranged ten small jamaru vessels (jamaru = Cucurbita idolatrica Lacerda) filled with bone ashes. Behind them stood one empty gourd bowl and one filled with urucú. The Pakidái chief, Karenauõ, on the other hand, had two large empty jamaru vessels standing in front of him.

Porêhiwõ now poured bone ashes from one after another of the small jamaru vessels into the empty gourd bowls, added a little urucú, mixed the two with his hands, and gave the bowl to Karenauõ, who each time poured the contents into one of the
[782] larger jamaru vessels. While the two Pakidái were silently per-
[788] forming their work, Hewemão was praying in a half-singing

Surára
Pakidái

/106 cont./

769 When the mixing of bone ashes, which lasted about two hours, was finished, Porĕhiwõ returned the half-empty little jamaru vessels to the relatives, who, amid lamentations, took them for further safekeeping. Then a solemn procession began, in which, however, the Surára chief did not take part. Karenauõ, the Pakidái chief, strode ahead, followed by Porĕhiwõ and Kurikayawõ, each of whom held in his hand one of the large jamaru vessels filled with bone ashes, a little urucú, and a few down-feathers of the gavião-real; all three were singing prayers. Behind them, weeping and lamenting, walked the closest relatives, who carried the small jamaru vessels. The warriors participating in the ceremony formed the end of the train.

[533] [782] This procession, which walked around the maloka courtyard several times, came to an end, after half an hour in front of the chief's hut, with a prayer sung in unison.

[517] Meanwhile night had descended and most of the members of the two tribes were lying in their hammocks, sitting around the fire, or calling on each other, singly or in family groups, in order to chat. Loud, happy laughter often resounded. Opposite the hut of the Surára chief, however, six warriors who wore the feathers of the gavião-real in their hair had kindled three blazing fires, upon which, in several black, round-bottomed clay vessels (see p. 115) they cooked banana soup until midnight. During this time a medicine-man helper who carried a bow and arrow in his hand ran around the outer circle of the maloka courtyard, singing loudly, and requested the assistance [625] of the hekurá for the success of the soup. After that, general quiet set in; only two men made their rounds in front of the maloka, as they did every night, in order to warn the inhabitants, if necessary, of a hostile attack (513).

[624]

513. The war chief divides up the watches each evening. The warriors have a feeling [805] about when their time is up and they must waken their successors; as a rule this is done after two or three hours.

Surára
Pakidái

/106 cont./

769
266 On the next day, April 6, 1956, the festival reached its climax. Toward 9:00 the Surára chief, his brother Kurikayawõ, and the chief and war chief of the Pakidái sat down around the pots of banana soup, in front of which also stood the two jamaru vessels with the bone ashes of the deceased, and all the other male members of the tribe sat around them. The Surára chief started to pray loudly, whereupon a rather long choral song was struck up. Then he poured the bone ashes into all the soup pots, mixed them thoroughly with his hands, and scooped out a calabash full for himself, which he emptied hastily and to the last drop. Thereupon the Pakidái chief, the brother of Hewemão, and the war chiefs of both tribes drank, followed by all the older and younger men, including the larger boys, who drank last (514). As a result of this ceremonial drinking of the

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514. Hewemão also offered my servant and me a full calabash each, along with the war chiefs. When we had drunk them, he slapped our backs appreciatively and said that we were now true Sarára.

bone ashes, it is believed, the strength and spirit of the deceased will remain within the tribe and contribute to its vigor.

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[533]
[782]
[262] Following this drink, a prayer of thanksgiving was sung. Then the men, youths, and boys together ate large quantities /107/ of the roasted tapir meat, as well as manioc flat-cakes, and after that the women handed them calabashes full of the refreshing drink made of pupunha fruits.

Invigorated and fortified with the powers of the deceased, the men were now able to proceed with the most strenuous part of the festival. But before this began, half of them blackened their faces and bodies with soot, which they scraped off of their cooking pots. Meanwhile others had again set in the center of the maloka circle the large clay plate upon which they poured the brownish snuff-powder -- epená --, out of bamboo containers, and in front of the plate they laid a large number of

[302]
769
276

/225 cont./ The sanemá say that the
793 hɛwĩawán kills vultures and sparrow hawks on his travels (Becher,
825 1960, p. 96). As we have already explained in another section of this chapter, the Sanemá believe that the eagle and other birds of prey are "men" who can be killed only if they belong to an enemy tribe.

793 The hikulaɛ offers the priest the possibility of flying to the
798 house of Omao. In order that I might understand him better and
[796] not doubt his veracity, the native making the drawing fixed a
126 propeller to the mysterious sphere. One might say that the
[795] hɛwĩawán is carrying the soul of a dead person to the house of Omao.

756 The second religious practitioner of the Sanemá is a shaman, who is called sablí. The supernatural world over which he has power is different from the world of the priest, and therefore his function is different from that of the former.

• [533] In order to become a shaman, the candidate must submit to a very rigorous training under the guidance of an old sablí who knows how to sing the "Great Kɛɛ."

756 /226/ During the period of apprenticeship, which lasts
276 several weeks, the candidate takes yopo continually through a
262 tube or simply with the hand, eats very little and only the food
515 prescribed; he does not bathe and almost does not speak. Among
123 the Waica of the Upper Orinoco I saw a group of these candidates who gave me a depressing impression since they showed prolonged suffering as a result of the consumption of the drug. We were not able to speak with them, and we were not allowed to take blood samples from them as we did with the other members of the rancheria.

756 It seems that all the men are potentially sablíes, but
533 among them there are some who are very strong and others who
994 are weak, and only the strongest ones are able to sing the "kɛɛ" well. This song is rendered by the sablí at the end of his period of instruction, when the candidates are prepared and ready to receive the hĩkulas, or "specific vital principles" of the species of flora and fauna, with the exception of fish. As soon as they hear the call of their master, they obey and go toward his locality, where they find the sablí candidate waiting for them to enter his

/226 cont./

756 chest. They enter, without loss of time, through the extremi-
533 ties of the body and through the head. They arrive in the order
774 in which their names are sung by the master sablí, who in this way "builds a pueblo" of a microcosmos in the body of the man. The stronger the master, the greater will be the "pueblo," and the greater this "pueblo" is, the better chance the sablí will have to augment his inner world and his power during his life.

756 The hikuladi of the sablí is essentially different from that
774 of the priest, in the sense that it is inhabited by the vital princi-
[778] ple of vegetable and animal species and not by the souls of departed ancestors. The man also has a specific híkula, different from his soul and which, as is true of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, seems to be immortal and spiritual, essentially joined to animate matter until death. Each specimen of a species has a specific híkula; after death, the speciman goes to a luminous place in the forest. While the soul of a man may abandon the body during sleep, etc., without its being detrimental for the man himself, the híkula never leaves until the moment of death. Furthermore, the soul is typically human, while the híkula is found in man and also in plants and animals. Some informed us with insistence that women and small children do not have híkula.

773 Here is the story which explains the origin and the nature
774 of the híkula in the animate world.

[776] Chinanídmawan is a gigantic demon of dreadful shape, with long, sharp claws. He has skin which is impenetrable and as hard as rock.

/227/ One day Chinanídmawan came to attack the Sanemá. The latter posted themselves with their weapons to face his attack. Soon, however, the Sanemá realized that arrows and lances had no effect on the demon, who captured most of his enemies. Chinanídmawan quartered and devoured his victims, but kept the skins, which he nailed out on boards around and inside his house.
[171] (It is extremely interesting that this custom of keeping the skin
[727] of enemies has been preserved in Sanemá mythology, since it is reminiscent of some tribes of the Cauca, in Colombia, of the Mauta of Ecuador, of the Huauca of Peru, and of the Inca. It also recalls the cult of Xipe in Central America.)

/228 cont./

756 778 125 [533] The Sanemá sablf has great power over animals and plants represented in his hikuladɨ, with which he communicates while he is asleep. If he should dream about a dangerous animal, a jaguar for instance, he makes him sit down in order to begin the song ɔ̃kamɔ̃ against jaguars. This song keeps the jaguar from the rancheria, but, when it is relatively near, the hikuladɨ of the sablf goes out to kill the jaguar in the forest, where the hunters will find him dead on the following day. But if the men sent by the sablf do not find the body of the jaguar, everybody remains in the rancheria on the following day, for they fear that the Great Jaguar may be in the forest and will kill anybody found in his way.

756 533 754 [825] [774] The sablfes sing almost every night, and the bigger the animal who appears to them in their dreams, the more intense is the song. In his songs, the sablf can send any hfkula from his chest to go and kill a man in a foreign rancheria, however far it is. Usually he does this at night, and on the following day the victim's companions find him dead in his hammock.

774 756 [754] [753] [761] I have the impression that the hfkulas belonging to the various species are, of themselves, absolutely passive and that they behave in an active way only at the command and wish of the sablf. Most sicknesses, including death, are caused by a hfkula introduced into the body of the man by the intervention of the sablf and by his magical power.

756 755 774 The priest sablf, influenced by the effects of yopo, shouts, sings, and dances around the patient. With this he attempts to scare off the harmful hfkula which is striving to enter the body of the man. It is very often personified by a man who is symbolically fought by the hfkula of the sablf and others chosen from his "pueblo of hfkula" in his chest. The curative art of the sablf depends to a great degree on his diagnosis, according to which he chooses from his great hfkula in his chest those which, by their skill, can combat the hfkula or hfkulas causing the sickness. It goes without saying that a young and inexperienced sablf makes mistakes in his diagnosis of identifying, from among all the possible thousands, the hfkula which is causing the sickness sent by an enemy. It

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broth with a strong tang. Little Sempronio was the cook—Sempronio with the small eyes and fierce, sharp teeth, ever ready to crunch anything edible there was to be found. We didn't worry too much about hygiene, because out in the blue it is hardly practical. Nor did we dwell on the question of Indian tastes in meat: they prefer the intestines and all the peculiar parts, to the flesh. Enrico and I, up on the Gran Sabana, had once lived for months at a time on monkeys and even worse things, and we weren't squeamish. But while Artur was fastidiously eating his helping of monkey-meat, his face contorted with disgust and he opened his mouth to let fall a little black thing, half chewed. This proved upon examination to be a real Shirian titbit, but Artur said a good many things with exclamation marks, ending up with: 'I'd never have believed that things would come to this.'

'Nor would the monkey,' I replied philosophically, while Sempronio retrieved the mouthful and it disappeared with a strong sucking noise, as if he was taking a drink.

When we had finished our meal of monkey, Luis Antonio and his brothers sang some Shirian airs, with a grace and phrasing that surprised us. We soon joined in with our own renderings: a deep chorus echoed through the mountain gorges. Then, for something to do, we chopped down some trees which fell with a huge crashing tumult. Luis Antonio took his axe and heroically tackled a giant *guaramán*, and four hours later a vast mass of wood toppled down, bringing with it in its thunderous fall other trees fifty or sixty yards away. But The 24 ants, rudely disturbed, poured ferociously out of their nests, making us flee to our hammocks, where we lay waiting for the night.

Before we tackled the higher part of the climb (where the way led steeply upwards between treeless slopes and vertical sandstone cliffs) we set fire to the undergrowth. This is a means of clearing the crevices between rocks, and makes for an easier ascent. We waited one day after the fire, and then set out. Halfway through the climb we found ourselves black as chimney-sweeps—thanks to the ash and charcoal which covered our path. It was easier going than we'd reckoned on, and soon after midday we were all on the summit—all of us with the exception of Artur, who had found the pace too hot for him.

The Sarisariñama heights form part of the vast system of table-topped mountains (or sierra) which rise in isolated massifs over the whole region bounded by the Rio Negro, the Rio Branco, the Atlantic, and the Orinoco and known geographically as Guiana. These mountains tower up suddenly from

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136 know the world, a few excursions into those terrible waters where the very absence of peril means, for these lowland monsters, the greatest peril of all.

V

* 123 The Samatari had now got quite used to having us in their midst and their primitive fear of us—the emotion which gives rise to an instinctive urge to [609] kill—had disappeared utterly. The fear strangers evoke in them is twofold: they are afraid of being killed, and of having their womenfolk raped. We hadn't killed anybody, and the women did not attract us. We left them in peace, even when they were driven by their insatiable professional curiosity to inspect our private parts.

From being merely tolerated, therefore, we soon passed quite naturally to the stage of having a rather more positive value placed upon us. Soon we were superior beings who had chosen their tribe as the privileged recipients of our friendship. This was without a doubt an auspicious sign for them, and one they must profit by. For the moment the profit which the medicine-man had in mind related only to matters appertaining to magic and moral spheres and had nothing to do with our persons. We ourselves, indeed, were not called upon to play an active part.

* 123 Ceremonies of propitiation were enacted at night. The medicine-man would 756 sit in his hammock with his feet dangling over the fire, invoking prosperity for 789 his own people and ruin and death for their enemies (who were doing the same 782 thing, in the same spirit, at the same moment, in some other corner of the forest). But the Samatari had us with them: the effect of their invocations would travel far and fast, like the explosion of the *bombamalí*.

* 123 The medicine-man would suddenly sit up in his hammock as if he was cold, and after burbling something incomprehensible, slowly shout out the name of ● 533 a fruit—for instance, *monema*. The last syllable was held for some time, with 756 modulations that reminded me of an echo rebounding from hill to hill. When this 789 solo was over the men's chorus—they were all sitting round the fire in their hammocks, too—would take up the refrain, reciting a long litany full of mournful verses. According to the brief explanations given by Luis Antonio, the gist of it was: much *monema* for the Samatari and none for their enemies. Let hunger strike them down. They are bad men. A moment's silence would

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follow. Then, in the same fashion, the medicine-man would announce the name of another fruit, let us say *olashi*. The chorus would repeat the same formula. And so on, through all the thirty-two fruits of the forest, the litany was sung. Then it was the animals' turn—those that provided meat. From the noble tapir right down to the worm: might he pass serenely from his muddy lair into the tomb of the Samatari stomach.

When the victualling business had thus been settled, the time was ripe for more general songs and prayers. One little song that turned up I had already heard among the Guayca and other Shirians. The tune was easily recognizable, catchy, even, but the words were strange, and probably not understood by the singers themselves. Then came isolated songs, and broken snatches of tunes that went on all night till the first gleam of dawn, when the priest and his flock gradually dropped off to sleep. The ceremony was over.

It might appear from a hasty glance at their ceremonies of propitiation and exorcism that the Shirians believe in the supernatural, but this is not so.

We often questioned Uaremu on the subject, but his reply was always in the negative, and he laughed at the Makiritari's Canaima and the other tribes' Maguaritón. 'We don't believe in those stories,' he answered, invariably, in his picaroon Spanish. The Shirians do not believe in supernatural beings such as gods, devils and their intermediaries. Certain ceremonies of theirs, it is true, are addressed to powers which we should not consider as belonging to the material world, but to the Shirian mind they do belong to this world, like other evident natural forces.

For instance, the medicine-man's cures for the sick possess a value and a methodology corresponding to medicine as we practise it. The sickness—the bad thing—is clearly visible. The medicine-man is a man with a powerful voice, which frightens the bad thing as it might frighten a man. The bad thing is forced to take flight, leaving the sufferer free. Magic, as we conceive it, is not involved.

Another example will emphasize the Shirian viewpoint even better. When the Shirians are shooting the rapids, anyone on board without a definite job, such as steering or paddling, will make a gesture with his hand to keep the swirling waters well away. For us, such a gesture would imply some sort of superstitious idea, for there is no physical connection between the hand that is trying to ward off the water and the water itself. But to the Indians it is rather an example of a purely physical phenomenon arising out of the man's will-power and his determination that the boat shall not be swamped, which his

1491

The Fiesta of the Harvest of "Pijiguao"

527 The fiesta of the harvest of the fruit of the "pijiguao" palm
574 (Bactris gasipaës) is perhaps the most important event of the year.
During this harvest everybody has food to spare and consequently
[484] can receive all those who want to visit them. As a result of this
there is a great deal of traveling during this period.

[628] Frequently two or three settlements gather in order to celebrate the fiesta. Then one part will go to celebrate the same fiesta in other friendly settlements.

The hosts, and sometimes the visitors as well, go out on a hunting trip, which lasts for several days, until they collect a suficient quantity of meat. This meat is smoked and preserved for the fiesta.

527 When the hunters come back, the fiesta begins at night with considerable joy and singing. The hunters gather and march around the interior patio of the settlement several times. Then
[526] there begins a mock battle with cudgels. Those who have axes or machetes use these in place of cudgels. They are waved about in the air in a way similar to an attack in fencing or fighting with cudgels. The weapons clash together, but blows are not struck at the body.

After this comes the fire procession. Every man takes a burning torch from the fire and joins the others who go around and around the periphery of the great circular patio formed by the huts. From time to time, when passing in front of one of the surrounding ranchos, they rap with the torch on one of the straight supports which hold up the roof, scattering sparks in the air.

[526] Afterwards, they do what is known as "golpeo al pecho" /hitting the chest/. The boys and a few men pair off against those of another settlement and carry out a duel of blows on the chest. One will present his chest while the other hits it with the side of the fist.

• [533] All of these acts are carried out amidst much jubilation and singing. Sometimes this is repeated on the following night.

/470 cont./

512 [276] men. Some of them sing in singsong voices to influence the spirits, while others wander around like drunks. A few do not take any "yopo" at all. These "yopo" cantilenas generally last for about two hours.

In the afternoon a few more women, including some of those who were in the conuco in the morning, go out to look for /471/ firewood. Other women devote themselves to spinning cotton. At about 5:00 in the afternoon the women and girls go down to the stream to fill all the gourds or totumas.

[824] [721] [706] A little before dark, the evening meal ends. Palm leaves are placed so as to obstruct the entrances to the paths against the coming of wandering spirits and also to make greater difficulty for any attacking band coming from an enemy settlement. Every house lights its own fire and prepares for the night. At about 7:00 P.M. all is silent.

[535] [533] [203] [594] But if the moon comes out, the women and children may continue singing and dancing until well into the night. Or when there are visitors who arrived during the day, there might be crooning of news throughout the night, until the coming of the sun puts an end to it.

Names

553 551 Every individual receives a name given by his parents. Until the child receives a name, he is called by any of the standard names that are applied to small children. The use of these standard names is usually prolonged for several years after the boy or girl has received his own name. It is taboo to give one person the name of another. There are no homonyms or namesakes. An individual might be given the name of a plant, an animal, an action, an aspect, or sometimes simply be given some name invented by his parents.

551 Nicknames are given freely. Some have a root, others do not. Usually they are very descriptive and frequently very biting.

It is not good manners to call a person by his name, if it can be avoided. It is always better to say: the older brother of so-and-so, the older sister of so-and-so, the husband of so-and-so, the father of so-and-so, or the mother of so-and-so.

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neutral. The treacherous feast for their Shamatari enemies proved to be unsuccessful: The intended victims had accepted the invitation, but were informed of the plot just before they arrived. One of the Reyaboböwei-teri who had close kinsmen among them had misgivings about the matter and warned them.

Late in the afternoon it was learned that the Mahekodo-teri were, in fact, in the vicinity of the village, allegedly on a "camping trip." Kąobawä, of course, suspected their story, but to demonstrate his friendship he invited them to be his guests at a feast. As he and his men had been away for nearly two weeks, there was an abundance of food in their gardens and they could easily afford to entertain the Mahekodo-teri and their traveling companions, the Boreta-teri. Together, the guests numbered about 100—after they fetched their women and children.

This sets the stage for the feast in the kind of context that makes it more intelligible: The specific historical relationships between the participants and the nature of their mutual mistrust. Now I will give the details of the events that followed.

The Feast

Perhaps because he suspected the Mahekodo-teri and Boreta-teri of intimidation, Kąobawä also invited the Karohi-teri to attend the feast. They are a small but dependable ally and had themselves separated from the Mahekodo-teri many years ago. This established a balance of power at the projected feast should any trouble arise, for the combination of both Boreta-teri and Mahekodo-teri was of sufficient strength to worry any host. With the aid of the Karohi-teri, Kąobawä's group was more of a match for the visitors.

The feast started out on a sour note. It is the custom of the Yąnomamö visitors to arrive only after an invitation from their hosts, sent by messenger on the day of the feast. The Mahekodo-teri and Boreta-teri, however, arrogantly arrived nearly a week before Kąobawä's group was prepared to receive them and set up a large, temporary camp a short distance from the village. They were guests and could legitimately demand to be fed. Because of this, Kąobawä and his covillagers were under obligation to feed them, some hundred or so people, and took them to the gardens to supply them with enough plantains to last a week. Kąobawä was a little disturbed that they would be so impolite as to arrive uninvited, but took the situation quite philosophically. After all, they had fed his group for the better part of a year.

He and several other men cut a large quantity of plantains, which were hung in his house and allowed to ripen for a week, to be boiled into *daze*, a thick, sweet soup, on the day of the feast. That afternoon Kąobawä and a few of the older men commissioned a hunting party comprised of young men, several of whom were Kąobawä's brothers, whose responsibility would be to obtain a large quantity of fresh meat to give to the visitors on the day after the feast. Most of them were reluctant to go, as their feet were still sore from the trip to the Shamatari village. A few of them claimed to be sick and managed to escape recruitment into the hunting party in this way. This hunt, with the hanging of the plantains in the headman's house, initiated the feast. The excitement that usually attends a feast began at this time.

That evening the young men danced and sang in the village, an institution called *amaamo*, thereby insuring themselves with luck on the hunt. (The Yąnomamö also

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 107]

amamo on other occasions, but invariably do so on the day the plantains are hung in the village in anticipation of a feast.) Every evening the men are away on their *henimou*, the week-long hunt, the young women and girls sing and dance in the village to insure them success.

The hunters left at dawn the following morning, carrying a large supply of roasted and green plantains with them to eat while they hunted. They had picked a site some 25 miles up the Mavaca River for their hunt, as game was known to abound there. Their task was to obtain monkeys, armadillos, wild turkeys, wild pig, tapir or sloth, the only meat deemed worthy to give to guests. They would not be permitted to eat any of this game, but could consume any other game they captured, such as deer, small birds, a small species of wild turkey, or insects and fish they happened to come upon. The feast meat, however, was earmarked for the guests and could not be eaten by the hunters. On this particular hunting trip the men miscalculated the amount of food they would need to sustain them during the hunt, and one of them returned after four days to fetch more plantains. He also gave Kaobawä a report on the hunt's success, creating a small sensation in the village: They had already killed a large number of *kaalo*, a particularly large and very desirable monkey. They had also come upon a quantity of turtle eggs at a sand bar and were eating as many as they could. When they returned later, they cached the remaining eggs in my house, so as not to have to share them with the visitors.

Meanwhile, the visitors were making gluttons of themselves, and the hosts started to grumble about the large number of plantains they had already eaten. The week's supply they originally provided had been consumed in half that time, and the guests had been given permission a second time to harvest more from their hosts' gardens. This was no way for guests to behave, and it soon became apparent that they were intimidating Kaobawä's group. Still, he and his followers continued to supply them with all the food they needed, keeping their complaints to themselves. They did not want it to be known that they were worried about running short of food. Instead, they planned to conduct the feast on a scale that would be difficult to reciprocate.

The hunters returned and presented their catch to Kaobawä. It was brought to his house and placed on the ground, wrapped up in leaves. Kaobawä ignored it for a while and then slowly began to unpack it (see Fig. 4-1) while everybody watched—especially the hunters, who were quite proud of the quantity of meat they had obtained: seventeen *kaalo* monkeys, seven wild turkeys, and three large armadillos. Hunting trips are not usually this successful, but the hunters had fortunately stumbled into a large band of *kaalo* and had nearly wiped it out.

Kaobawä and his group were anxious to conduct the feast for their visitors and present them with the food, because by so doing the visitors would be obliged to leave for home, thereby ending the drain on the gardens.[3]

The feast was scheduled for the day following the return of the hunters, even though the Karohi-teri had not yet arrived. Kaobawä and his group were so anxious to rid themselves of their ravenous guests by this time that they decided to hold a separate feast for the Karohi-teri on the day following the departure of the Mahekodo-teri. This would involve a considerable amount of extra work, but they were more than willing to

[3] I have seen several instances of Yanomamö groups getting rid of visitors who have joined them semipermanently by holding a feast in their honor; when the ceremonial food is presented, the visitors are obliged to leave.

The members of Lower Bisasi-teri had joined Kaobawä's group for the feast, as they, too, were on friendly terms with the Mahekodo-teri and had benefited from the latter's hospitality after the treacherous feast in 1950. Before Kaobawä's group had separated from the Lower Bisasi-teri, there had been one headman over the entire composite village. This was a brother to Kaobawä's father; when the groups split, the older man led the faction of Lower Bisasi-teri, leaving Kaobawä to lead the Upper group. On this particular day, when the two groups had temporarily coalesced for the feast, the older man was conceded the honor of chanting with the visitor's delegate, Asiawä, the son of the Mahekodo-teri headman.

Ten minutes after the old visitor entered the village, Asiawä entered the clearing, touching off an explosion of wild cheering that marked the opening of the dance. He was spectacular in his bright new loin cloth, long red parrot feathers streaming from his armbands, and black monkey-tail headband covered with white buzzard down. He marched dramatically to the center of the village clearing, while all of Kaobawä's followers cheered, and struck the visitor's pose: motionless, head upward, and weapons held vertically next to his face. He stood there two or three minutes so his hosts could admire him. This gesture signified that he had come in peace and was announcing his benevolent intentions by standing where all could see him. If they bore him malice, they had to shoot him then or not at all.[5] He then marched to Kaobawä's house and was met by Kaobawä's father's brother, the temporary leader of the combined host group, and the two men immediately began to chant. This was the formal acceptance of the feast invitation by Asiawä on behalf of his entire group. They chanted for five minutes or so, bouncing up and down from the knees, now face to face, now side to side, but always lively and loud. Suddenly, they stopped, and Asiawä squatted, his back to the sun, while the host's representative retired to his hammock. The cheering died down. Asiawä squatted for several minutes before one of Kaobawä's younger brothers brought a half-gourd full of plantain soup to him and set it on the ground. He ignored it politely for several minutes, staring into the distance, holding his weapons horizontally next to his mouth. Presently, he put his weapons down, picked up the container of soup, and drained it in one draft before setting it back down. As soon as he had set it down, one of Kaobawä's younger brothers brought him a large pack-basket filled with boiled green plantains and smoked armadillo meat. Asiawä stood while the strap of the basket was placed over his head and adjusted across his shoulders so as to not crumple his headdress. Trying to look dramatic, he staggered rapidly out of the village under his burden of food, while the hosts again cheered wildly. This food was eaten by the visitors while they finished their decorating, each receiving a small portion.

Within a half-hour of Asiawä's departure the visitors had completed their decorating and had assembled just outside the entrance to the village. The men, all finely decorated, stood at the front of the gathering, while the women, girls, and young boys, also decorated, but each carrying a load of family possessions, brought up the rear. At the signal of Asiawä's father, the first two dancers burst into the village, separated, and danced around the periphery of the clearing in opposite directions, while Kaobawä's group welcomed them enthusiastically with shouts and shrill screams. Two at a time,

[5] I have a number of informants' accounts of visitors being shot down while standing in the clearing to announce their visit. Whenever I accompanied visitors to strange villages for the first time I, too, was obliged to participate in this rite and always had an uneasy feeling about it.

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the visiting dancers entered, pranced around the village periphery, wildly showing off their decorations and weapons and then returning to the group. Each dancer had unique decorations and a unique dance step, something personal that he could exhibit. He would burst into the village screaming a memorized phrase, wheel and spin, stop in his tracks, dance in place, throw his weapons down, pick them up again, aim them at the line of hosts with a wild expression on his face, prance ahead a few steps, repeat his performance, and continue on around the village in this manner, while the hosts cheered wildly. When everyone had had an individual turn, the entire group entered, danced single file around the periphery several times, and gathered at the center of the clearing, where they formed a tightly knit group. They stood motionless, except for the heaving of their chests, holding their weapons vertically. After they had stood there a few moments—in a final display of decorations—Kaobawä's followers emerged from their houses and approached the center of the village, each man inviting one or more of the visitors to his house, leading him away from the village center by the arm. As each visitor was led away, his family, watching from the village entrance, unceremoniously joined him at the host's house, bringing the family possessions along. Within a few minutes the dance plaza was deserted and the visitors were resting comfortably in their hosts' hammocks. Even in the hammocks, the Yanomamö visitors are able to put on a silent display of their finery as they lay with their legs crossed, one arm behind their head, staring at the ceiling, waiting for their hosts to feed them ripe plantain soup from the bark troughs—it is almost as if they are strutting from a reclining position.

After the guests had been given their first round of soup, the men of Kaobawä's village assembled outside the entrance and came in to dance around the village for their guests. They, too, had an opportunity to put on a display of their own decorations, after which they retired to entertain the guests.

There were three troughs full of soup in the village. The first one was emptied in the process of bringing numerous gourdsful to the some one hundred visitors (see Fig. 4-2). After they had consumed this, the guests then assembled at the second trough and began eating there. Before this trough was finished, they moved as a group to the third trough and repeated their ceremonial consumption, before returning to their hammocks to rest and regain their appetites. Approximately two hours had passed from the time the first dancers entered the village until the guests retired from the third trough of soup. They had not yet eaten all of the contents—all in all, some 95 gallons of it—but managed to do so by morning.[6]

Shortly after dark the marathon chanting (*waiyamou*) began—it continued until dawn. At dawn the visitors conducted their trade and were given the baskets of "going-home food": boiled green plantains with smoked meat. The women and children departed with the food, leaving the men behind to trade. The visitors made requests through their headman, and Kaobawä would produce the item by enjoining one of the local men to give it. The item would be thrown at the feet of the man who wanted it. He would ignore it for a while and then give it a cursory examination, throwing it back on the ground. His peers would then examine it in greater detail and extol its virtues, while the

[6]During some feasts, the ashes of the dead are mixed with the boiled, ripe plantain soup and eaten by friends and relatives of the deceased. The feast also serves as a preliminary to a raid that involves two or more villages. The sponsor of the raid will entertain his allies in a feast the day before the raiding party departs. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the raid.

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By 8:00 A.M. the going-home food had been presented to the visitors, and the trade had been conducted. Had the visitors been polite, they would have left for home at that time. Instead, they decided to stay and witness the second, smaller, feast that Kąobawä was going to conduct for the Karohi-teri, who had not arrived in time for the major event. This capped the series of insults the visitors had heaped upon Kąobawä's group. The visitors were warned that if they should stay, the would be expected to fight in a chest-pounding duel.

It was obvious now that the visitors were looking for trouble, and Kąobawä's group was obliged to react or be subject to even further intimidation. Hence, the challenge to pound chests. At this point the visitors broke camp and departed, much to the relief and joy of Kąobawä's group. In fact, they were pleased that they had been successful in intimidating their guests into leaving, and the men gloated over this accomplishment the rest of the day. They were convinced that their threats were credible enough to force their potential adversaries to withdraw, presumably because the Mahekodo-teri felt they were inferior in strength.

Kąobawä and his group held another feast for the Karohi-teri that same day, but without the assistance of the Lower Bisaasi-teri who left shortly after the previous feast terminated.

The Chest-pounding Duel

The feast for Karohi-teri was essentially the same as the one for the Mahekodo-teri and Boreta-teri. When the dancing was over and darkness fell, the men began to chant again. The first pair of chanters had not completed their rhythmic presentation when the jungle around the village erupted with hoots and screams, causing all of the people in the village to jump from their hammocks and arm themselves. When the men had found their arrows and were prepared, they began yelling back at the unseen guests, rattling the shafts of their arrows together or against their bows and/or pounding the heads of axes against pieces of firewood or on the ground to make noise. The Boreta-teri and Mahekodo-teri had returned to accept the chest-pounding challenge and entered the village, each man brandishing his axe, club, or bow and arrows. They circled the village once, feinting attack on particular men among the hosts, then grouped at the center of the village clearing. The hosts surrounded them excitedly, dancing with their weapons poised to strike, then entering into the mass of bodies. Heated arguments about food theft and gluttony developed, and the hosts and guests threateningly waved their weapons in each other's faces. Within minutes the large group had bifurcated and the chest-pounding began. The Karohi-teri aided Kąobawä and his followers, whose joint numbers were even further swelled when the Lower Bisaasi-teri rushed to the village after hearing the commotion. There were about sixty adult men on each side in the fight, divided into two arenas, each comprised of hosts and guests. Two men, one from each side, would step into the center of the milling, belligerent crowd of weapon-wielding partisans, urged on by their comrades. One would step up, spread his legs apart, bare his chest, and hold his arms behind his back, daring the other to hit him. The opponent would size him up, adjust the man's chest or arms so as to give himself the greatest advantage when he struck, and then step back to deliver his close-fisted blow. The striker would painstakingly adjust

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411
516
291
342
137
726

Fig. 5-2. Kaobawä's men and their allies lining up (wayu itou) *to raid the Patanowä-teri.*

726
[123]
[533]
[825]

children and women dietl down and all was quiet in the village once again. I squatted there, unable to see what was going on, growing more nervous by the moment, half suspecting that the warriors were sneaking up on me to murder me for tape recording a sacred rite. Then the silence was broken when a single man began singing in a deep baritone voice: "I am meat hungry! I am meat hungry! Like the carrion-eating buzzard I hunger for flesh!" When he completed the last line, the rest of the raiders repeated his song, ending in an ear-piercing, high-pitched scream that raised goose bumps all over my arms and scalp. A second chorus, led by the same man, followed the scream. This one referred to meat hunger of the kind characteristic of a particular species of carnivorous wasp. They screamed again, becoming distinctly more enraged. On the third chorus, they referred again to the buzzard's meat hunger, and a few men simultaneously interjected such descriptions of their ferocity as: "I'm so fierce that when I shoot the enemy my arrow will strike with such force that blood will splash all over the material possessions in his household!"

Then the line of warriors broke, and the men gathered into a tight formation, weapons held above their heads. They shouted three times, beginning modestly and increasing their volume until they reached a climax at the end of the third shout: "Whaaaa! Whaaaa! WHAAAA!" They listened as the jungle echoed back their last shout, identified by them as the spirit of the enemy. They noted the direction from which the echo came. On hearing it, they pranced about frantically, hissed and groaned, waving their weapons, until Kaobawä calmed them down, and the shouting was repeated two more times. At the end of the third shout of the third repetition, the formation broke,